

International driving permits avert travel woes

Information courtesy of the USAREUR Office of the Provost Marshal

HEIDELBERG, Germany -- U.S. Army, Europe officials recommend that any U.S. forces personnel who drive outside their host country acquire an international driving permit.

This summer, increased security during the World Cup soccer championships in Germany makes the international driving permit a must-have in traveler's wallets, said Tom Lorenzini, USAREUR vehicle registrar.

"The expected additional border checks will raise your chances of getting fined if you are without it," he said.

"Permits are required in Austria, Greece, Spain, Turkey and all Middle Eastern countries," he said.

Lorenzini recommended the permit even for travelers who only occasionally take trips outside Germany, Italy or the Benelux nations.

Countries may change their rules at short notice, Lorenzini said, so "having the international permit is really the safe way to go."

USAREUR driver testing stations have all the information on documentation for the permit. The requirements are slightly different from country to country, but include:

- An application form, available at the issuing agency or your local driver testing station. The form for American communities in Germany's Rhineland-Pfalz is online at <http://rmv.hqusareur.army.mil/intdrlic.htm>.
- A valid U.S. forces driver's license (AE Form 190-1F).
- Two passport-sized, civilian-dress photos.
- A fee, normally between 13 and 30 euros.
- A U.S. passport (required for civilians and family members).

In Italy, Soldiers and civilians can get an international permit only from the American Automobile Association. The web address for more information is <http://www.aaa.com>.

International driving permits are valid for one to three years, depending on the country of issue, or until the U.S. forces license expires, whichever

comes first, Lorenzini said.

They are not valid for driving in the country where they were issued, and are only valid with a U.S. forces driver's license, he said.

For more information, the U.S. Department of State has many useful tips on driving abroad on its Web site at http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/safety/safety_1179.html.